



King County Water Taxi News



*Paul Brodeur,
Marine Division
Director*

THE DIRECTOR'S VIEW

2013 was successful for the Water Taxi

I extend my thanks to each of you, our valued riders, for your continued patronage and support of another great year for the Water Taxi. The close of 2013 marks the end of my first full

year as director of the Marine Division. What has most impressed me during this period is the passion and support that our riders show us and the excellence and commitment our crews bring to our operation every day. As a result, ridership grew on both Water Taxi routes.

As we continue to work behind the scenes to secure new boats, a future terminal, and more, I don't take nearly the time I'd like to be down at the dock. If you do happen to catch me there and have any questions or comments, or maybe just want to say hi, please feel free to do so.

For the King County Ferry District and the Marine Division, 2013 was a highly successful year. Our accomplishments included:

- **Delivery of the maintenance and moorage barge**—a very welcome addition for our engineering team. They have been outfitting this platform with the tools and equipment needed for the maintenance work that keeps our service reliable.
- **Acquisition of the *Spirit of Kingston***, which has melded into our operations quite nicely. She has been a great vessel for the West Seattle route. The generous outdoor deck space is very popular with riders seeking to catch a view of our beautiful Seattle skyline.
- **A contract signed in late December for two new vessels with additional capacity, to be delivered in 2015.** We spent countless hours in 2013 on the new

vessel procurement process, issuing a request for qualifications from potential boat builders and two requests for proposals, culminating in a design/build contract with All American Marine in Bellingham.

- **Increased activity in the last half of the year on the future of Colman dock and the new passenger-only ferry terminal for our operations.** We have been working with Washington State Ferries,

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Artist's rendering of new vessel

King County signs contract for new vessels

The King County Ferry District announced in late December that a contract had been signed with Bellingham-based All American Marine to design and build two new Water Taxi vessels.

The first new catamaran will replace the *Melissa Ann*, a leased vessel that has been operating on the Vashon route since 2010, in the second quarter of 2015. The second new catamaran is expected to replace the *Spirit of Kingston*, which has been operating on the West Seattle route since the start of last summer, in late 2015.

The *Spirit of Kingston* replaced the *Rachel Marie* after the Ferry District acquired her last spring. The *Rachel Marie*, which served as a backup boat last summer, was returned to her owner when her lease expired December 31. We'll

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The Director's View

pushing along an agenda that includes conceptual design plans, a memorandum of agreement, and most recently the beginning of a 30 percent design effort.

Looking ahead:

- In January, we expect to issue a notice to All American Marine to begin the design and construction of our new vessels, with the first new vessel to be delivered late in the second quarter of 2015.
- We'll also continue working closely with the City of Seattle as their Seawall project continues, impacting waterfront accessibility. As we learn about the impacts of the project, we also have an opportunity to convey the needs of our riders in hopes of finding solutions that benefit all of us.
- The Colman dock project will reach 30 percent design, including design plans for the future passenger-only terminal, early in the second quarter.

Thanks again for all your support. I look forward to another great year in 2014!

Fare increase coming March 1

In October 2013, the King County Ferry District passed a resolution increasing Water Taxi fares effective March 1, 2014. The new rates will be in place on the next day of scheduled service—Monday, March 3. Although we have informed ORCA about the rate change, we suggest you speak with your employer's ORCA representative to confirm that your rate will be updated.

Water Taxi Fares Effective March 1, 2014

One-Way Water Taxi Fares	West Seattle	Vashon
Cash adult fare (ages 6-64) Cash and ticket vending machine purchases	\$4.75	\$5.50
Regular adult fare (for ORCA card)	\$4.00	\$4.75
Senior fare (age 65 and older) Riders with disabilities (RRFP card required)	\$2.25	\$2.75
Youth fare (ages 6-18) (ORCA card only)	\$3.25	\$3.75
Children (ages 0-5)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bicycle fare surcharge Limited capacity per sailing	\$0.00	\$0.00

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New vessels

keep the *Spirit of Kingston* as a backup vessel once the second new catamaran joins the fleet.

The new vessels will each carry 250 passengers—78 more than the *Melissa Ann* currently holds on the Vashon route. That added capacity means more passengers will be able to use the water taxis during the busiest weekday commute periods.

The vessels will be powered by twin diesel engines driving propellers and will have a service speed of 28 knots. Passengers will notice other benefits as well. The vessels will have two boarding doors, which will help speed boarding and unloading and also allow passengers to more easily reach the upper inside and outside decks. Bicycle capacity will increase from 18 to 26, and the interior appointments will be more comfortable for passengers.


Design and construction of the two vessels is expected to cost \$11.8 million, 80 percent of which is funded by the Federal Transit Administration. The remaining 20 percent will be funded by the Ferry District. Design of the vessels is expected to start during the first quarter of 2014, with construction following in the second quarter.

Ridership continued to grow in 2013

Thanks to your continued patronage, for the third year running the Water Taxi's annual ridership grew for both the West Seattle and Vashon routes, setting records on both routes!



VASHON						
Month	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	%
Jan	8,813	11,081	13,810	12,820	16,397	27.9%
Feb	8,184	10,847	11,996	14,130	14,263	0.9%
Mar	9,459	13,448	15,083	15,330	15,654	2.1%
Apr	9,359	12,603	13,414	14,835	16,526	11.4%
May	8,338	12,003	14,087	15,604	16,735	7.2%
Jun	9,006	13,963	14,487	14,989	15,199	1.4%
Jul	9,469	13,276	13,887	15,150	17,547	15.8%
Aug	8,661	14,569	15,681	16,392	16,880	3.0%
Sep	8,826	13,923	14,082	13,992	15,197	8.6%
Oct	11,005	14,415	15,170	17,642	17,525	-0.7%
Nov	9,756	12,182	13,517	14,572	13,441	-7.8%
Dec	10,098	11,310	12,405	12,514	12,460	-0.4%
Total	110,974	153,620	167,619	177,970	187,824	5.5%

 = WSF service

WEST SEATTLE						
Month	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	%
Jan	0	0	2,733	8,037	8,067	0.4%
Feb	0	0	2,569	8,837	7,188	-18.7%
Mar	0	0	2,745	9,371	8,666	-7.5%
Apr	20,361	13,068	10,335	18,468	15,894	-13.9%
May	31,557	17,389	17,367	26,454	26,129	-1.2%
Jun	33,864	22,093	28,202	26,633	36,076	35.5%
Jul	46,961	37,041	38,417	41,716	47,588	14.1%
Aug	43,979	32,169	41,157	44,225	45,336	2.5%
Sep	26,602	16,946	28,912	31,775	26,984	-15.1%
Oct	12,872	10,318	25,270	20,530	19,332	-5.8%
Nov	0	2,578	9,734	7,967	8,059	1.2%
Dec	0	2,418	8,714	6,304	7,967	26.4%
Total	216,196	154,020	216,155	250,317	257,286	2.8%

 = Argosy service

Running in inclement weather

In the past few months, the Water Taxi has been challenged at times to run in inclement weather. This has prompted some of our riders to ask how we determine our operating status. The following is a reprint of a column from one of our vessel captains that sheds light on that question.

Weather and the Melissa Ann

By Captain Dan Krebbiel



Captain Dan Krebbiel

What weather will force us to cancel a sailing?

Generally, seas over six feet exceed what riders can handle. Our sailing area needs sustained winds of 40 knots or more from the south to generate six foot seas. Our best indicators of wind conditions come from NOAA weather observation stations at West Point and

Alki Point and can be collected from web sites or weather radio. We will also consult other vessels and the Coast Guard for current conditions.

Here are the caveats:

- The data on the sites can be over an hour old.
- The exact wind direction affects the wave size. If it's more out of the east or west, seas may be less. If the

wind is freshening (still building) seas may not have gotten too big yet.

We will almost always go out and check. In the morning, if it's blowing out of the south and we can get to Vashon, we can always get to Seattle. In the afternoon, we will inform you before departure if we think we might get turned back at Alki point.

What about a northerly?

The Vashon dock is exposed to the north and the "fetch," or distance the seas have to build, is longer to the north than to the south, it will take less wind to produce seas that may force us to cancel. Thus, the limiting factor is being able to safely board and disembark passengers at the Vashon dock. We have found these limits to be a sustained 20-25 knots. A few weeks ago we canceled

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Rider alerts

The Marine Division sends alerts to inform Water Taxi customers about delays or disruptions in service due to weather conditions, mechanical challenges, or upcoming closures.

We always try to give you as much lead time as possible—at least an hour's warning—keeping in mind that in situations involving changing weather or mechanical repairs, the longer we wait, the more accurate our information will be.

If you haven't signed up for alerts, we encourage you to do so. Find a sign-up link on our home page, www.kingcounty/watertaxi. You can choose to receive alerts by email, text, or both.

The Marine Division sends alerts for the Water Taxi routes only. If you'd like to receive alerts for bus routes you use (including the West Seattle shuttles #773 and #775), you have to add those routes to your subscription.

With many changes taking place on the Seattle waterfront that could affect your access to the pier during the Seawall project, we also suggest that you subscribe to project alerts at www.waterfrontseattle.org/get_involved.



PHOTO BY CHAS REDMOND, IMAGE 7043, FLICKR CC

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Running in inclement weather

while northerly winds were diminishing. The seas were still building due to fetch and duration.

What about all those drifting logs?

The *Melissa Ann's* hulls are each divided into six watertight compartments each. The forward-most compartments on each side will only hold about a hundred gallons. If we hit something hard enough to open one up, you wouldn't even notice a list. We use a pair of night-vision binoculars to aid in detection of debris (and kayakers).

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or the crew.

Here's to smooth sailing.

Cap'n Dan

For instructions, visit
www.kingcounty.gov/watertaxi

Find more news at www.kingcounty.gov/watertaxi

We welcome comments from the public. Send an e-mail to watertaxi.info@kingcounty.gov or leave a message at 206-477-3979.

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